Broken Object = Unaesthetic?

KINTSUGI

PRESENTED BY:	PRESENTED TO:	DATE:
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OVERVIEW

In this project under the theme "Hyperlinked Originals", I connected a Samsung PL210 digital camera by cable to an EPSON XP 7100 printer. I have simulated that a photo of an object is taken by the digital camera. The LCD display of the camera is damaged, which becomes clear by the cracks in the display. Firstly, a flash fires visualizing the photo shooting process. In the end, the photo is printed by the printer. When taking a closer look at the printed photo, one can see the cracks in the display were also printed on the photo.

CONTEXT

A number of different contexts is addressed within this project. First, the broad theme of media archaeology arises, which examines the media of the past in terms of their influence in a society. It was within this context that I was inspired for the title of the project. Kintsugi is a traditional Japanese method of repairing ceramics or porcelain by gluing missing shards with precious metals such as gold, silver, and platinum. Old media and technologies are considered outdated and unattractive. Within the Open Design course in the Bachelor Code & Context, we addressed the different

facets of this context. By using the photo of the camera with the broken display, I emphasize that older media is considered just as beautiful as newer media or technology and one should use it fiercely and proudly rather than storing e-appliances without ever using them anymore. Moreover, the project tells about a media landscape such as mass media, especially one that spreads fake news. This includes print media, broadcasting and much more. The individual actors in a media landscape, such as a magazine or news agency, are symbolized by components such as the printer or camera. The project audio-visually portrays the process of capturing a message and broadcasting it to the world. The bizarre thing is that the image you see through the camera lens is not printed out at the end of the process. In the end, a previously captured image of the camera display is printed. This is why the cracks are included on the print. In the background, there is a secret direct connection of a phone to the printer. The cable between the camera and the printer is a fake connection. Thus, the camera embodies a dead item or totem in this project.

DESIGN

A number of aesthetic design & tech decisions were made. One of the most important design decisions was the use of a flash unit, because this is the eye-catcher of the project. I didn't build on the camera's flash because the flash is reminiscent of the earlier way of shooting photos. Once turned on, the flash works continuously and fires flashes continuously. This emphasizes the attention that is created around certain events. Sometimes it is also artificially generated attention. In any case, the perception is consciously directed to a certain matter. Another exciting design decision was which object to photograph. For this, I have chosen a Buddha statue. With the photographed Buddha, a reference is made to a video installation called "TV Buddha" by the US video artist Nam June Paik from 1974. It is considered an "icon" of video art. For the technical realization I used two simple electronic components besides the printer and camera. To trigger the flash at regular

intervals, I programmed and fixated a servo motor with the help of an Arduino and attached it to the flash unit.

PROCESS

I found the whole process to be quite multi-layered and interesting. In the beginning, I decided to use the camera. I was confident that I would find a good idea to implement relatively quickly. But that wasn't the case. It wasn't until I went deeper into research and actively looked for other possible objects to combine the camera with that I came closer to developing a mature concept. This is where I am very grateful for the feedback from my colleagues and professor. After the concept was created, there was another challenging phase. This time I could clearly envision the concept, but not its implementation. Further, I focused way too much on a polished technically clean solution, which ultimately was not doable with the given hardware technical resources and limitations. From this point on, the project turned into a more improvised and faked solution. Thanks to helpful and constructive feedback by my professor, I have learned that the focus is not on a neat technical solution but rather on how a human experiences the installation from start to end. This was what I needed in order to get a push in the right direction. From then on, it was really fun to try minimal variations on the basic structure of the project and finish it into a coherent whole. Last but not least, the knowledge gained from this project inspires me to plan with care during the conception and design more consciously as well as pragmatically within the implementation phase in my future designs.